



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

Two men sentenced to more than 7 years in prison for trafficking in counterfeit goods following an ICE investigation

MIAMI- Jesus Torres, Special Agent-in-Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), R. Alexander Acosta, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida and Thomas S. Winkowski, Director, Field Operations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), announced that defendants Ji Wu Chen and Meihua Li were sentenced today to more than seven years in federal prison.

On June 9, 2006, Chen and Li were found guilty by a federal jury of conspiring to traffic in counterfeit goods, trafficking in counterfeit goods, and concealing and selling imported counterfeit goods. Today, Federal District Court Judge Jose E. Martinez sentenced Ji Wu Chen to ninety-seven months and Meihua Li to eighty-seven months in federal prison.

According to the evidence presented at trial, the defendants conspired to traffic in, and did actually traffic in, goods violating trademarks. These goods included electrical cords, batteries, handbags, wallets, suitcases, shoes, hats, sunglasses, watches, key holders, umbrellas, and different items of clothing and accessories bearing the counterfeit trademarks of Underwriters Laboratories, Duracell, Louis Vuitton, Rolex, Prada, Gucci, Coach, Disney, Nike, Major League Baseball, Oakley, and others. The defendants imported counterfeit trademarked goods from China to their home and warehouse. The defendants then sold these counterfeit products directly from their warehouse as well as from their booth at the Opa-Locka Flea Market.

On December 13, 2005, ICE agents and officers from the Miami-Dade Police Department, pursuant to arrest and search warrants, arrested the defendants and conducted searches of their home, warehouse, and flea market booths. The quantity of counterfeit items seized filled several tractor-trailers. The items seized included counterfeit clothing and clothing accessories, and untested and potentially hazardous electrical cords and batteries.

“Today's sentences are a reflection of ICE's commitment to protect the American consumer from inferior and unsafe products,” said Jesus Torres, Special Agent-in-Charge of ICE in Miami. "We will continue to pursue these counterfeiters who not only compromise our economy, but more importantly, the safety of our citizens."

United States Attorney Acosta stated, “The lengthy prison sentences imposed by the Court is a direct reflection of the seriousness of this crime and of the potential safety hazard posed by the sale of counterfeit items, included untested and unsafe electrical cords. In this and every case, the sale of fake goods exposes unwary consumers to potentially serious physical harm.”

Mr. Acosta commended the investigative efforts of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, as well as the assistance provided by the Miami-Dade Police Department. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Jason Emilios Dimitris and Karlyn Hunter.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.